

# FOREVER ACTIVE

PERSONALIZED FITNESS AND WELLNESS FOR MEN 50 +

## Recovery, Its importance to Your Physical Health

### Introduction

Being physically active is great and important for your health but just like anything else, too much of a good thing can be bad for you. “Recovery”, a very misunderstood concept when we discuss physical activity, is just as important as being active, in helping you reach your physical goals. When you exercise, whether it is formal structured exercise or just working around the house, the body (muscles, ligaments, tendons and bones) becomes physically stressed . Giving your body “recovery” time allows it to heal, and in fact, get stronger. As well, there is an emotional/mental aspect of “recovery” that is important too. If you are too physically active not only does your body physically burnout but you will emotionally as well. When you stop looking forward to being physically active you will stop being physically active. All the health and emotional benefits of physical activity come from being active consistently. Once you start to miss opportunities to be active you lose some of its benefits. “Recovery time” helps you recharge the batteries so you can maintain a consistent and sustainable physically active routine. This newsletter will review the latest research on “Recovery” and how important it is for your overall physical and emotional health and how it will help you improve your physical performance and reach your physical goals.

### Avoiding Overtraining

Everyone is familiar with a sprained ankle or a pulled muscle and the fact that these injuries can significantly affect your ability to be physically active. However, not everyone is as familiar with “overtraining” and the effect it can have on you. It is useful to think of “overtraining” as an end point on a spectrum that you gradually get to by being too physically active over a period of time. In other words you have not given your body sufficient “recovery time” to adapt to the frequency and intensity of your physical activity.

The key to avoid “overtraining” is to pay attention to different physiological and psychological sign and symptoms that your body gives off. Self-awareness is paramount. Always monitor how you are feeling mentally/emotionally and physically to confirm that you are handling and adapting to the level of physical activity that you are participating in. At the beginning, if you have not given yourself enough recovery time, often after two or three weeks of being physically active, the euphoria of doing something new starts to wear off and physical and emotional tiredness and exhaustion start to set in. This is a significant reason why people stop being active once they have started. Remember, “Success is in the Doing” but if you do it too frequently or too intensely without sufficient “recovery time” you “over train” and this becomes counter-productive.



### Did You Know

#### Overtraining Indicators

##### Psychological

1. Loss of interest in doing / participating physical activity.
2. Disturbed sleep and constantly feeling tired.
3. Becoming more irritable, moody and less patient.
4. Decreased ability to focus and concentrate.
5. Loss of appetite
6. Lower sex drive

##### Physiological

1. Heavy, lifeless feeling when you are physically active.
2. Decline in performance.
3. Unexpected weight loss
4. Muscle and joint soreness that does not ease off with normal rest.
5. Higher than normal resting heart rate.
6. Increase frequency of illness (weakened immune system)

##### Notes:

1. Psychological indicators are often more useful for early detection that you may be treading towards overtraining and that additional recovery time may be necessary.
2. The signs of overtraining can also be symptoms of other medical conditions. If you have concerns, check with your health care provider.

**“Sometimes doing less is far more powerful than doing more”**

## Recovery Techniques

### Active Vs Passive Recovery

**Active Recovery** is a sort of a hybrid between resting and exercising. It involves purposely exercising at a low-intensity. **Passive Recovery** means completely resting from exercise. Both types of recovery techniques are important, there are times when the body and mind needs complete rest from physical activity, but there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that Active Recovery is the most efficient recovery method.

Active recovery means that on your "off" days you can do pretty much any type of exercise, as long as you keep your intensity lower than what you would do in a normal workout. Walking, light running, swimming or cycling, using an elliptical, Thai Chi, Yoga are all excellent forms of active recovery as long as you do them at a comfortable intensity (**50% to 70% maximum heart rate (MHR= 220-age)**) for around 30 minutes. For additional effectiveness you can follow up your "active recovery" workout with an extended stretching and foam rolling session.

Please refer to the following links to learn more:

#### Stretching:

<http://forever-active.com/learning-about-stretching,learning-about-stretching>

#### Form rolling:

<http://forever-active.com/myofascia-what-it-is-why-it-is-important-for-your-physical-health-and-how-to-treat-it-with-self-massage,myofascia-what-it-is-why-it-is-important-for-your-physical-health-and-how-to-treat-it-with-self-massage>

### Cool Down for Recovery

It should be noted that the cool down, 5 minutes of low intensity activity, you do after every workout is actually a form of active recovery. Cooling down does a lot more than help the return to resting heart rate and breathing rate. It also prevents post-workout pooling of blood in the legs which can cause light headedness (which can lead to fainting), speeds the removal of lactic acid from the muscles, and helps prevent muscle soreness in the hours and days following a workout. Unfortunately, the cool down is often a skipped portion of someone's physical activity (**stretching is NOT the same thing as cooling down**), but that extra five minutes is invaluable in helping you recover faster and prevent soreness.

## Additional Recovery Techniques

### Sleep

Sleep is one of the most over looked components to an effective and sustained physical activity routine. Sleep not only affects your ability to recover properly from physical activity but also your mood and ability to concentrate. It is recommended that if you are exercising 5 hours a week you get an extra 30 minutes of sleep a night.

### Nutrition

Post workout nutrition is very important for proper recovery to occur. The first two hours after physical activity of moderate to heavy intensity is critical. The rule of thumb is that you want to ingest 1 gram of carbohydrates (CHO) for each pound of body weight and ideally you want a 4:1 ratio of CHO to Protein ingested during this time.

Examples of foods to be eaten for effective recovery;

1. Chocolate milk
2. Fruit smoothie with protein
3. Low fat Greek yogurt
4. Sports drink
5. Bananas
6. Bread with peanut butter

**Fluids**– Monitor your urine. Dark urine is a sign of dehydration. Drink fluids until your urine is a pale yellow colour.

**Supplements**– generally, unless you are an elite athlete or have a special health/medical condition nutritional supplementation is not necessary. The additional cost is not justified. Remember, there is no substitution for a good nutrition all the time. Follow the Canada's Food Guide;

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>

### Cold and Heat

You can use cold compresses or cold baths for 10 to 15 minutes to combat inflammation caused by training. Moist heat can help loosen stiff muscles, ligaments and tendons but you must be careful not to aggravate existing inflammation. When directly applying heat or ice, use a towel as a buffer to protect your skin from burns or frostbite.

### Massage

Deep tissue massage, myofascial release and Thai massage are all effective in breaking up adhesions, increasing circulation and increasing flexibility of the muscles. Scheduling regular massages into your monthly physical activity schedule will help significantly with recovery.